

2006 Session Report

• 20th Legislative District •

Winter 2006

Dear friends and neighbors,

Even though it is a 60-day session, there are significant issues the citizens of Washington want lawmakers to address. Republicans spent a month traveling around the state this fall on a Listening Tour asking citizens what was important to them – and people were in a mood to talk to us about issues affecting their families. They want the Legislature to create access to more affordable health care, take a tough stand to protect families from sex predators and methamphetamine in their communities, and ensure access to good paying jobs.

From the comments we heard from citizens like you, Republicans in the Legislature have introduced our "Commitment to Washington." It consists of 11 proactive ideas for addressing issues that matter to the people we've talked to. We will be working diligently on our agenda and look forward to hearing your ideas and concerns throughout the session.

Sincerely,



Richard DeBolt
State Representative



Gary Alexander
State Representative



Rep. Gary Alexander
Rep. Richard DeBolt

We look forward to hearing from you!

Because this is an election year, state law limits the amount of legislative information we can provide to you through the mail. However, we are always available to answer any questions you have and help you in your dealings with state government. Feel free to contact us with your ideas and concerns. We're here to assist you, as well as represent you.

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Our Commitment to Washington

A 2006 Republican legislative agenda

After a month traveling around the state speaking to citizens during our House Republican Listening Tour, we heard common concerns and new ideas for addressing the issues that matter to people across Washington. From this effort came our Commitment to Washington — a detailed proactive agenda supported by both House and Senate Republicans for the 2006 legislative session.

On this list, you will see solutions and ideas for improving our state that came from people like you. If you have questions or would like more detail on our agenda items, we hope you'll contact us.



Rep. DeBolt speaks with citizens at one of the House Republican Listening Tour town hall meetings. The ideas received from people around the state provided the foundation for the caucus agenda, known as the Commitment to Washington.



Washington
Senate &
House
Republicans

OUR COMMITMENT TO WASHINGTON

- ✧ Put government on a budget by restoring voter-approved tax and spending limits.
- ✧ Protect our kids from sex offenders by passing "Jessica's Law Plus."
- ✧ Give health care back to patients by allowing affordable, tailored choices that work best for them and their families.
- ✧ Get government out of the way of job growth by removing the regulatory burden on small business, repealing the death tax, and reforming unemployment insurance.
- ✧ AIM for safer neighborhoods through enhanced penalties for Auto theft, Identity theft and Methamphetamine production.
- ✧ Welcome families to our state parks by eliminating the day use fee.
- ✧ Help every student achieve WASL standards and graduate on time by offering remedial classes, tutors, and expanded summer school programs.
- ✧ Help needy families by reducing energy costs.
- ✧ Allow citizens and their elected representatives — not the courts — to decide the definition of marriage.
- ✧ Protect property rights and prevent government from taking property without compensation.
- ✧ Strengthen the family farm by providing tax relief, allowing families to use their land as intended, and ensuring access to water.

Public Safety

Republicans introduced House Bill 2476, known as "Jessica's Law Plus," to impose stronger penalties against sex offenders, such as prison terms of 25 years or more for child rape and GPS monitoring of sex offenders.

The primary difference between our bill and its Democrat counterpart, House Bill 2411, is that HB 2476 does not discriminate between an offender who is in a position of trust or responsibility — a family member or friend, a coach or teacher, a physician or a member of the clergy — and an offender who is a stranger. Under the Democrats' bill offenders who are known to their victims would still have a chance at receiving a shorter sentence — about 7½ years in prison. That's an important loophole considering 90 percent of sex offenses against children are committed by people known to the victims.

Our bill goes farther than "Jessica's Law" in Florida, named after a girl who was raped and murdered by a known sex predator whom authorities couldn't locate. Her father Mark Lunsford has endorsed the Republican bill, and we believe that if a bill wins approval this session, it's more likely to resemble our stronger legislation.

Rep. DeBolt • Rep. Alexander

Election improvements still needed

The 2005 elections demonstrated that we still have not achieved the reforms necessary to ensure fair and accurate election results. Even with a limited number of ballot measures in this off-year election, we continue to see errors and a lack of accountability in election departments such as King County's.

Only minor changes in the law were adopted last session, and Republicans are continuing to push for real reforms that will give citizens confidence in the security, accuracy and integrity of our elections. Republicans will again be supporting these election reforms:

- **Improving the process for matching signatures** on ballot envelopes to verify they match the signature of the voter the ballot belongs to. We want to make sure the absentee ballot was cast by the voter whose name is on the ballot.
- **Ensure voters are using traditional residential addresses** for voter registration if the voter has a traditional residence. This would help prevent duplicate registration by using a P.O. box.
- Requiring that **if the number of illegal votes exceeds the margin of victory**, the election is declared void and a special election will be held. These instances are rare, but we should be able to ensure an accurate outcome to every election.
- **Avoiding duplicate voter registrations** by requiring people transferring from one precinct to another to register at least 30 days in advance of an election. This would be accomplished by House Bill 3041, prime-sponsored by Rep. Alexander.



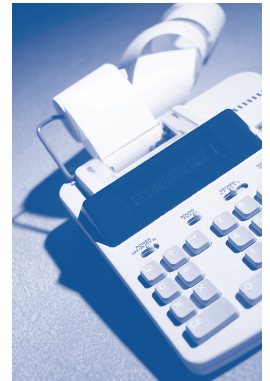
It's our privilege to sponsor local high school students as pages for the House of Representatives, including Timberline sophomore Kaitlin Kilpela, who served during this session's opening week. Thanks to all of them!

GOP calling for fiscal responsibility

Pressure mounting to overspend

Although the two-year budget adopted just nine months ago called for a 12 percent spending increase and nearly \$400 million in tax increases, there are pressures mounting to spend even more this session when lawmakers make mid-stream adjustments to the 2005-07 operating budget. The governor's proposed supplemental budget calls for increasing spending to 16 percent over the previous biennium and setting aside large portions of the taxpayers' reserves into new accounts with a footnote on how to spend it later.

Republicans will argue for greater spending restraint and protections for taxpayers that will limit the growth in state spending from one year to the next. Our Commitment to Washington calls for restoring the spending limit law that was approved by voters and repealed by majority budget writers last session. We want tighter limits on spending growth, a 60 percent vote requirement for tax increases, and a constitutional "rainy day" fund that will protect taxpayers from boom-and-bust budget cycles that result when the economy fluctuates.



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Rep. Richard DeBolt



Rep. Gary Alexander

Your 20th District Leaders – *Your voice in Olympia*

Reps. DeBolt and Alexander will be working in key positions to bring your voice to the table in Olympia when important decisions are made. Rep. DeBolt is once again leading his caucus as House Republican Leader. As such, he is leading the caucus on policy development and session planning to advance ideas and legislative policies that are good for the 20th District and all areas of Washington.

Rep. Alexander is the ranking Republican on the House Appropriations Committee. He is representing the caucus in budget negotiations and working to restore responsible spending practices that will protect taxpayers against excessive growth in government spending.

